

**TOWN OF EASTON, MARYLAND**  
**Easton Town Hall**  
**14 S. Harrison Street**

February 2, 2009

**PRESENT AT CONVENING**

8 Mayor Robert C. Willey	11 Councilmember Scott R. Jensen
9 Council President John F. Ford	12 Councilmember Leonard E. Wendowski
10 Councilmember Kelley K. Malone	13 Councilmember Moonyene Jackson-Amis

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Also in attendance were the Town Manager Mr. Karge, Town Attorney Ms. VanEmburch and Town Clerk Ms. Ruf.

In attendance from Easton Utilities were President & CEO Hugh E. Grunden, Vice President & CFO Paul Moeller, Gas Department Manager James P. Crowley and Director of Marketing & Communications Geoffrey F. Oxnam.

**CONVENING**

At 7:00 p.m., President Ford called the meeting to order.

Ms. Malone opened the meeting with prayer and led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JANUARY 20, 2009 MEETINGS**

Upon motion by Mr. Wendowski seconded by Mr. Jensen and carried unanimously, minutes of the January 20, 2009 meetings were approved with Ms. Jackson-Amis abstaining due to her absence.

**EASTON VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT**

President Ford advised that the Fire Board meeting was held and the Council updated prior to the regularly scheduled Council meeting.

**ITEMS BY MAYOR WILLEY**

Mayor Willey stated that HB 36 will be introduced tomorrow which would allow highway speeds to be reset without a formal engineering study.

It was the consensus of the Council to support the bill and e-mail the legislators tomorrow.

Mayor Willey discussed a recent meeting with the Town and Assistant Attorney outlining upcoming projects. He stated that work to declare specific property surplus would commence shortly.

Ms. Jackson-Amis questioned which property. Mayor Willey responded the Port Street condominium and property on Chapel Road. She asked for rationale for each property in writing.

**CONFIRMATION OF RE-APPOINTMENT TO HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**

Upon motion by Mr. Jensen seconded by Mr. Wendowski and carried unanimously, Mr. John Sener's re-appointment to the Historic District Commission for another three year term commencing October 2, 2008 was approved.

Ms. Jackson-Amis asked for notice of vacancies before appointments.

Mr. Ford asked constituents names that may be interested in appointments to be forwarded to the Mayor's office for consideration.

**ITEMS FROM THE TOWN MANAGER**

Mr. Karge was in receipt of a letter from Mr. Greg Gannon requesting permission to burn the granary barn at Mulberry Hill Farm subject to appropriate permits being issued by the Talbot County Health Department.

1 Mr. Gannon was present and stated that the Fire Department has been notified.

2  
3 Upon motion by Mr. Wendowski seconded by Mr. Jensen and carried unanimously, permission was  
4 granted subject to the standard burn conditions requested by the Town.

5  
6 Ms. Scott-Taylor, Economic Development Director asked Mr. Karge to have the Council notify her of  
7 their participation in their attendance and judging at the St. Patrick's Day Parade March 17.

8  
9 **RESOLUTION NO. 5945, "A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AUTHORIZING**  
10 **THE TOWN PLANNER OR HIS DESIGNEE TO SIGN FINAL SUBDIVISION PLATS."**

11  
12 Upon motion by Mr. Wendowski seconded by Mr. Jensen and carried, Resolution No. 5945 passed  
13 unanimously following a roll call vote.

14  
15 **ITEMS BY THE TOWN ATTORNEY**

16  
17 Ms. VanEmburch included in the packet a timeline for the upcoming election to be held on May 4. The  
18 deadline for submitting nominating petitions is April 6.

19  
20 Ms. VanEmburch discussed the downtown planning study and where the Planning Commission is in  
21 the process. She discussed making amendments to the Comprehensive Plan.

22  
23 Mr. Hamilton, Town Planner was present and stated that the Planning Commission reviewed the  
24 Downtown Plan prepared by the consultants and recommended that it be an amendment to the plan. He  
25 stated that the Council has to adopt it. He stated that an amendment to the plan requires advertising and  
26 public hearings. Mr. Hamilton stated that the amendments to the Comprehensive Plan need to be  
27 completed by October.

28  
29 Ms. VanEmburch suggested sending a formal letter to the Planning Department directing them to  
30 include the language suggested by the Council regarding the downtown plan.

31  
32 Ms. VanEmburch stated that Resolution No. 5945 is a temporary measure regarding signing the plats.  
33 She stated that the amendment to the Subdivision Regulations will be a subsequent ordinance.

34  
35 **MS. JUDE CARMEN TO ADDRESS COUNCIL REGARDING DOWNTOWN PARKING**  
36 **AND LIGHT ON GOLDSBOROUGH STREET**

37  
38 Ms. Carmen asked that her matter to address the Council be deferred until the following meeting.

39  
40 **OVERVIEW OF UPCOMING GAS BASE RATE INCREASE REQUEST**

41  
42 Mr. Hugh E. Grunden, President & CEO was present on behalf of Easton Utilities. Mr. Grunden  
43 introduced Mr. Moeller, Mr. Crowley and Mr. Oxnam. He stated that their intention is to do an  
44 overview of the pending gas service base rate increase request with a Public Hearing scheduled for the  
45 following meeting. Mr. Grunden discussed the process for a rate increase. He stated that this is the first  
46 request for an increase in six years for the gas department. Mr. Grunden stated that the rising costs  
47 have eaten into the rate of return to the point of nearing 0%. Mr. Grunden requested a public hearing  
48 for the next council meeting.

49  
50 Mr. Moeller provided an overview of their pending gas rate increase request. He discussed what base  
51 rate revenue is and why the gas department needs an increase and the amount of base revenue actually  
52 allowed to collect from customers. Mr. Moeller reviewed the proposed revenue revisions as well as  
53 some proposed revisions to the gas rate structure and gas tariff. He discussed a proposed timeline for  
54 implementation for these increases.

55  
56 Mr. Moeller stated that it is not just the growth in customers making it necessary to request this rate  
57 increase. He stated that they continually have to invest in infrastructure to ensure that aging  
58 infrastructure does not become a liability.

59  
60 Mr. Moeller stated that they are asking for a 4.5% in revenue to be collected from their customers  
61 which represents a little over \$350,000.

62  
63 Mr. Moeller discussed the timeline for filing a formal increase with the Maryland Public Service  
64 Commission hopefully allowing new rates to be effective June 1.

1 Mr. Wendowski discussed the risk of not keeping the plant up to date.

2  
3 Ms. Jackson-Amis discussed ways to notify the public of infrastructure concerns and potential  
4 problems.

5  
6 Mr. Oxnam discussed venues for notifying the public.

7  
8 President Ford set the Public Hearing for February 17 at 7:45 p.m.

9  
10 **LETTER FROM MS. CARLENE PHOENIX, ACTING CHAIRMAN, EASTON**  
11 **AFFORDABLE HOUSING BOARD REGARDING LOTTERY FOR OFFSITE ELM STREET**  
12 **HOME**

13  
14 Upon motion by Mr. Wendowski seconded by Ms. Malone and carried unanimously, approval was  
15 given to hold an April lottery for qualifying applicants for the off-site Elm Street Home on West Street.

16  
17 **ITEMS BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

18  
19 Ms. Malone asked for consideration in the upcoming budget for to make Ward 1 more pedestrian  
20 friendly and possibly install sidewalks on Glebe Road and North Washington Street.

21  
22 Mayor Willey will get estimates prior to the next budget cycle.

23  
24 Mr. Wendowski congratulated five young gentlemen that received their Eagle Scout on Sunday.

25  
26 Ms. Jackson-Amis asked that the community lift up and remember Black History month.

27  
28 Mr. Ford discussed Presidents' Day and reminded everyone that it is the 200<sup>th</sup> birthday of Abraham  
29 Lincoln.

30  
31 **ADJOURNMENT**

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33 Upon motion by Mr. Jensen seconded by Ms. Jackson-Amis and carried unanimously; President Ford  
34 adjourned the regularly scheduled meeting at 8:09 p.m.

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Kathy M. Ruf, Town Clerk